

Outdone in Real Life

of Jacques Lebaudy, Recently Killed by ible Exploits of This Real Personage gination of the Great Novelist

down with his family and get some enjoyment out of the great wealth that was his.

But all in vain. As everybody who has been reading these pages knows, Jacques Lebaudy was a man who stuck to a thing he had undertaken with bulldog tenacity.

Nothing that his wife could say or do was capable of shaking his determination to gain complete possession of Jacqueline and bring her under the protection of all the strange plans he was perfecting to safeguard himself from his enemies.

Again and again by every means in her power she endeavored to free her husband from the fascination of the African sands, whose glitter had so long held him captive. But she might as well have tried to check the rise and fall of the Atlantic tides. To his dying day Jacques Lebaudy's life was ruled by the determination to make himself ruler of Sahara and to insure his daughter's succession to the throne.

The difficulties of Mrs. Lebaudy's position were greatly increased by the almost superhuman ingenuity her husband displayed in pursuing his end. If she employed detectives to guard her daughter, he found ways of outwitting them so successfully that on several occasions he just missed taking her away with him. If she undertook to have him committed to a sanitarium, he would either make his escape or promptly consummate some great business deal so shrewdly that the alienists could not help being convinced of his sanity.

At last Lebaudy's efforts to gain possession of little Jacqueline became so bold and frequent that Mrs. Lebaudy was obliged to abandon her plans to send the girl to school. So the unhappy child grew on toward young womanhood barely able to read or write her own name—and all because her father insisted that she was one day to be an empress.

Friends to whom Mrs. Lebaudy confided some of her endless anxieties advised her to arm herself with a revolver and not to hesitate to use it in case her husband became unduly threatening. And this advice she pondered carefully.

One day, after a particularly stormy scene with Lebaudy, she had her courage screwed up to the point of arming herself for protection against her husband. But she abandoned the plan when she picked up the morning newspaper and read what had taken place only a few hours before at Sing Sing prison. A young man had been strapped into that grim chair—a powerful current of electricity turned on—his life snuffed out in the twinkling of an eye. And all because his hands were red with the blood of one of his fellows!

Presently, however, something happened to upset all Mrs. Lebaudy's previous ideas and embolden her to arm herself. It was the killing of John L. de Saulles by his beautiful wife, Bianca.

The de Saulles were near neighbors of Mrs. Lebaudy, and she knew them both well. Her shock over the tragedy and her grief over the awful punishment which she felt sure awaited Mrs. de Saulles gave place to overwhelming amazement when she learned that the law had set her friend free and that public opinion justified her deed.

In the situation which had led up to de Saulles's death Mrs. Lebaudy saw an almost exact parallel to that in which she found herself. The young business man had been shot for doing precisely what her own husband was trying to do—deprive his wife of a loved child. If Mrs. de Saulles had been justified in shooting to kill under

Little Jacqueline Lebaudy, the strange child of the "Emperor," whose education has been neglected so that she can little more than read and write.

INTERNATIONAL



The Lebaudy home at Westbury, Long Island, where Mrs. Lebaudy shot and killed Jacques Lebaudy

those circumstances, why should Mrs. Lebaudy not do the same?

She procured a revolver, filled its chambers with cartridges and hid it where it would always be within easy reach. It was the last thing needed to complete the stage setting for the final tragic scene in Jacques Lebaudy's life drama.

For a week preceding the night when he met his death Lebaudy had been in a disagreeable mood. Several times he had visited the house at Westbury, Long Island, where his family lived, to repeat his demands for possession of Jacqueline. And each time when his wife refused him he had gone away in a rage.

On the fatal Saturday he was seen approaching the house about 6 o'clock in the evening. Mrs. Lebaudy hurried Jacqueline upstairs, telling her to bolt and lock her door and put in place the iron bars which made her room a tower of safety.

Lebaudy was even more excited than on his last previous visit. Seeing the futility of trying to reply to the torrent of abuse with which he greeted her, Mrs. Lebaudy

quietly withdrew to her own room on the floor above. This only served the heighten the "Emperor's" rage. For an hour he stormed through the rooms on the lower floor, smashing glassware, overturning furniture and shouting curses at the top of his lungs. Then suddenly the tumult ceased.

Mrs. Lebaudy, kneeling in prayer at her bedside upstairs, was quick to notice the ominous hush that had fallen over the house of tragedy. She jumped to her feet, tiptoed to the door and strained her ears. But no sound reached her save the low moan of sobs from behind Jacqueline's barred door.

"Thank God! He is gone, and we are safe for one night more," she murmured. She was about to knock on Jacqueline's door and relieve the agony of the child's fears when she heard the heavy tread of feet in the corridor below.

It was Lebaudy! He was coming upstairs, probably armed with an axe to smash his way into Jacqueline's room, just as he had threatened.

For an instant Mrs. Lebaudy stood irresolute, trembling in every limb. Then, with a prayer for heaven's guidance on her lips, she glided swiftly to her dressing table and took out her revolver. Remembering how her neighbor, Mrs. Jack de Saulles, killed her husband with impunity, and the pressure of the weapon against her palm giving her courage, Mrs. Lebaudy walked out into the dimly lit hall.

By the time she reached the head of the staircase Lebaudy was already mounting the first step below. Taking a firmer grip on the revolver, she advanced to meet him. As Lebaudy saw his wife he leaped upward two steps at a time toward her. With one hand he seized her by the wrist, with the other he reached for his hip pocket. But the determined woman with the pistol was too quick for him. Before his hand had found the weapon it sought her finger had pressed the trigger—once, twice, five times in all.

Each bullet found its mark in a vital spot of Jacques Lebaudy's body. Yet such was the man's vitality that not until the last of the volley had pierced him did his grip on his wife's wrist relax. He toppled backward, thudding heavily against stair after stair, to land a crumpled, bleeding, lifeless heap on the floor below.



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Mrs. Lebaudy fell in a faint. It remained for little Jacqueline to unbar her door, walk down the stairs past the pool of blood in which her father's body lay and give the alarm.

"Come quick!" she shouted over the telephone. "My mamma has shot my papa!"

This, of course, was Mrs. Lebaudy's story of the shooting and her excuse for killing her husband. What would have been Lebaudy's version of the tragedy will never be known.

And thus ended the extraordinary career of "Emperor" Jacques Lebaudy—not as he would have wished, in one of the marble palaces he had planned for the African sands; not while leading a victorious charge of his invincible Saharan guards; not even at the hands of the conspirators he had long dreaded.

There were no silk-clad, bejeweled courtiers to shed tears over his bier. No cathedral bells tolled, no cannon boomed, no flags dropped to half mast as his eyes closed for the last time. In the streets no throngs of loyal subjects gathered to mourn his passing and to acclaim his successor, the Princess Jacqueline.

And his funeral, with its handful of mourners and curiosity seekers—what a strange contrast that was to the imposing cortege which would have escorted him to the grave in the capital city of Troja! At the last minute it was actually questioned whether his body had the right to rest in consecrated ground.

Death made mock of all his vaulting ambitions when it laid him low in this unromantic way—the victim of the very woman he had chosen to share his throne.

Whether Jacques Lebaudy deserved the fate he met those who study his life closely will always regret that his peculiar genius never found the right opportunity to exert itself to the world's profit and make its influence felt for many generations.

If all his dreams had come true—if he had been permitted to conquer the African desert wastes and dot them with populous cities and fertile fields—what inspiring chapters "Emperor" Jacques I. might have added to the world's history!

Mrs. Lebaudy was arrested, but was quickly freed by the Grand Jury, just as she had expected she would be after the experience of Mrs. Bianca de Saulles.

A cruel disappointment awaited her, however, when she walked out of jail a free woman. As will be told here next Sunday, she was confronted with the most surprising obstacles to prevent her taking immediate possession of Lebaudy's huge fortune. The problems which she had thought solved forever when she shot him down suddenly gave place to new and even more distressingly perplexing ones.

(To be Continued Next Sunday)